

I am proud to recognize Marshall's achievements and wish him and his wife, Karen, along with their daughters, Morgan Alyssa and Elsa Breanne, well as they pursue new endeavors.

IRAQ'S STRUGGLING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 9, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to share with our colleagues a letter I sent yesterday to Secretary Rice regarding the plight of Iraq's struggling Christian community.

It is my hope that people of faith throughout the country contact both the incoming and outgoing administrations and urge immediate action to protect this ancient community, some of whom still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 8, 2009.

Hon. CONDOLEEZZA RICE,
*Secretary of State,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR SECRETARY RICE: Millions around the world just celebrated Christmas. In churches and homes throughout our own country children learned of Mary, Joseph, a census, a stable—of Nazareth and Bethlehem and other far away places. These lands of old that are found throughout the Bible are still home to ancient Christian communities with deep spiritual and cultural roots. In fact, with the exception of Israel, the Bible contains more references to the cities, regions and nations of ancient Iraq than any other country.

The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac's bride, came from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq and his sons (the 12 tribes of Israel) were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq as did the account of Daniel in the Lion's Den.

Tragically Iraq's ancient Christian community is facing extinction on this administration's watch. According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), Iraq's Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to between 500,000 and 700,000 at present. USCIRF also reports that "while Christians and other religious minorities represented only approximately 3 percent of the pre-2003 Iraqi population, they constitute approximately 15 and 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria, respectively, and Christians account for 35 and 64 percent, respectively, of all registered Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and Turkey."

It is critical to note, as the figures above indicate, that the violence and intimidation that Iraq's Christians and other ethno-religious communities have faced is targeted. In July 2008, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration & Refugee Services said this about the minority religious communities: "These groups, whose home has been what is now Iraq for many centuries, are literally being obliterated—not because they are fleeing generalized violence but because they are being specifically and viciously victimized by Islamic extremists and, in some cases, common criminals."

We need a comprehensive policy or even a point person at the embassy in Baghdad to

address the unique situation of these defenseless minorities. An article in Christianity Today by Philip Jenkins described what was happening this way: "What we are seeing then is the death of one of the world's greatest Christian enterprises."

I urge you, in your final days as Secretary of State, to take dramatic action on behalf of this hurting population and a good starting point is the recent recommendations put forward by USCIRF. I respectfully request a response from you, rather than the assistant secretary for Legislative Affairs.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

IN MEMORY OF MARY JAMES

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 9, 2009

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, it is with deep sorrow that I inform the House of the death of Mrs. Mary L. James.

Mary, who was born in West Plains, MO, was a graduate of Harrisonville, MO, High School and the University of Missouri, where she received a bachelor of science degree in education. Mary also earned a master's of public administration degree from the University of Kansas.

Through the years, Mary dedicated her life to education, health care, and to the betterment of her community and her state. She was a teacher, a volunteer, and lived her whole life surrounded by or working in the news business. In 1999, Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan appointed Mary as a member of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, and she became the board's president in 2005.

Mary also served organizations affiliated with the University of Missouri, which she so dearly loved, including the Chancellor's Fund for Excellence, the Advisory and Development Committee within the College of Education, and the Griffith's Leadership Society for Women. Mary was also a member of the Jefferson Club. In 2005, the Alumni Alliance recognized Mary for Outstanding Alumni Service to the University of Missouri System.

Mary also worked as the executive director of the Cass Medical Center Foundation, on the board of the Healthcare Foundation of Greater Kansas City, and on the board of the Cass Medical Foundation. In 2006, she was recognized by the University of Missouri as a Distinguished Friend to the School of Nursing because of her commitment to health care and to the University.

Mary also served as a member of the Harrisonville Park Board, including time as chairman. During her tenure on the park board, she advocated for a community sales tax that led to building a pool and maintenance facility for the city of Harrisonville, she wrote a grant and raised funds to build an outdoor theater, and she helped plan for a community center. Mary was a member of the Harrisonville Chamber of Commerce, the Harrisonville United Methodist Church, Chapter G.R. PEO, Delta Gamma, and the University of Missouri Alumni Association.

Mary's family had been prominent in the Missouri newspaper business. Her parents,

the late J.W. Brown, Jr., and Wanda A. Brown, were publishers of the Cass County Democrat-Missourian in Harrisonville. Her father served as Missouri Press Association President. She worked for 26 years as the human resources manager for Cass County Publishing, volunteering extensively in her spare time.

In 1971, Mary married Bill James, who himself has been a prominent figure in the Missouri newspaper business and is a former president of the Missouri Press Association. Bill is now the publisher of the Daily Star-Journal in Warrensburg, Missouri.

Mary, who is survived by Bill, by her two sons and their wives, by one granddaughter, by her mother, and by her sister, will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of knowing her, including me. She has led an exemplary life, which ought to serve as a model for young people in Missouri and throughout our nation. I know members of the Congress will join me in paying tribute the life of Mary James and in extending condolences to her family and friends.

INTRODUCTION OF THE KALAU-PAPA MEMORIAL ACT OF 2009

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 9, 2009

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to authorize establishment of a memorial at Kalaupapa National Historical Park on the island of Molokai, Hawaii, to honor the memory and sacrifices of the some 8,000 Hansen's disease patients who were forcibly relocated to the Kalaupapa peninsula between 1866 and 1969. I want to thank my friend and colleague Congressman NEIL ABERCROMBIE for cosponsoring this legislation.

I had hoped to see this bill become law last year. The 110th Congress version of the bill (H.R. 3332) passed the House in February 2008. It was approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in June 2008. Unfortunately, despite heroic efforts by Senators AKAKA, INOUE, and BINGAMAN, the bill did not come before the full Senate for a vote.

The policy of exiling persons with the disease that was then known as leprosy began under the Kingdom of Hawaii and continued under the governments of the Republic of Hawaii, the Territory of Hawaii, and the State of Hawaii. Children, mothers, and fathers were forcibly separated and sent to the isolated peninsula of Kalaupapa, which for most of its history could only be accessed by water or via a steep mule trail. Children born to parents at Kalaupapa were taken away from their mothers and sent to orphanages or to other family members outside of Kalaupapa. Hawaii's isolation laws for people with Hansen's disease were not repealed until 1969, even though medications to control the disease had been available since the late 1940s.

While most of us know about the sacrifices of Father Damien, who dedicated his life to care for those exiled to Kalaupapa, fewer know of the courage and sacrifices of the patients who were torn from their families and left to make a life in this isolated area. It is important that their lives be remembered.